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ABSTRACT

Citations in this bibliography provide a representative view of literature published during the past 5 years that may interest educators concerned with the subject of preschool education. Citations of publications from the ERIC database include either an annotation or an abstract. A selected bibliography of books on early childhood education and preschool education is appended. (RH)

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CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION:

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PRESCHOOL EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM

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PRESCHOOL EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM

It is paradoxical that as our world seems to become smaller, our differences appear to be magnified. The lens of communication narrows our perspective and illuminates our differences.

Fifty years ago children with similar backgrounds generally entered kindergarten and first grade with somewhat the same expectations. Very often, teachers represented that same background and their expectations were also very similar. Since then, however, our neighborhoods have become more diverse in nature, changing the demographics of many of our schools. Today, entering classes usually represent a variety of ethnic, cultural, and social characteristics.

In some communities, nursery school experience usually precedes kindergarten. Is there, then, a necessity for stratifying skills and expectations of not only the students but also of teachers?

Some educators believe that effective preschool teaching requires a different set of competencies than does elementary school teaching with its traditionally structured requirements.

In 1966, Lawrence Kohlberg had this to say about the importance of successful developmental transformation of a child's mode of thought to a more mature one.

> "...What seems required is a new approach which would take into account the fact that the preschooler's orientation to reality is a developmental stage which should be integrated into later stages of development. To put off 'reality' until elementary school is only to divorce the child's preschool world of the subjective from the elementary school world of the objective. What seems required is an approach which would not suppress the cognitive energies employed in preschool thought structures but would encourage their gradual transformation into more adult forms. This requires that the preschool cognitive stimulation programs be defined in terms of the child's concepts which are to develop rather than in terms of the child's concepts of science or of number of languages which are to be taught..." (Human Development 1966, Vol. 9, (1-2)

Perhaps if ideal transformation were achieved, the enthusiasm and creativity of the preschooler would survive in the transition from preschool to the more structured, kindergarten or first-grade experience.

On February 3, 1989, for the first time, regulations for teacher qualifications for preschool education in Massachusetts went into effect with certification "requirement" for group day care centers. While certification will not be mandatory, all persons wishing to teach in a preschool setting in Massachusetts will be strongly encouraged to seek certification. The certificate will be processed through the Office of Children. Some educators are hoping that state certification requirements through the Department of Education will expand the early childhood education level from K-3 to N-3.

A few issues emerging as a result of current concern are: Will the cognitive effects of preschool programs on different types of children be considered? Can every family afford to pay for private nursery school? Should curricula be standarized for this age group? If so, will early tracking result before a child is enrolled in kindergarten or first grade? Since caretakers in most preschool settings represent varying levels of teacher competency for that age group, would children be served equally? If we add the preschool teacher as a manager of all the resources that impact on our children, viz., families, social agencies, and schools that the preschool environment supports, then we more clearly understand the relationship of the preschool experience to the ultimate success or failure of the early elementary school years.

This introduction is an initial and tentative glance at the subject of preschool education. It is a subject which may prove to be key to long-term educational reform and deserves scrutiny by educators and administrators alike. The attached bibliography is representative of literature published during the past five years that may interest educators concerned with the subject of preschool education. It is by no means complete, but it may serve as a point of departure for those wishing to explore this topic further. Some of the publications were selected from the ERIC data base and are so identified.

Doris H. Christo

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AN ERIC SEARCH

JOURNAL ARTICLES AND DOCUMENTS

Barnett, W. Steven. "The Perry Preschool Program and its Long-Term Effects: Benefit-Cost Analysis." High/Scope Early Childhood Policy Papers, No. 2, 1985, 134 pp. ERIC ED264943.

This report details a benefit-cost analysis of the Perry Preschool program and describes the program's long-term effects. Conducted since 1962, research on the Perry Preschool program constitutes one of the strongest and best-known sources of support for the long-term efficacy of early intervention with disadvantaged children. The Perry Project collected data on 123 3- and 4-year-old disadvantaged black children (with no discernible physical handicaps) during the years of the preschool program, through the early elementary years, at age 15, and at age 19. Analysis of this data shows that the preschool program had a variety of significant positive effects on the children attending. These effects are the basis for comparing the economic benefits of one or two years of preschool. The report is divided into six sections, each dealing with a category of program effects, including the following: (1) the program and its immediate consequences, (2) elementary and secondary education, (3) higher education, (4) delinquency and crime, (5) welfare, and (6) employment and earnings. Each section discusses the data, assumptions, and methods used to evaluate costs and benefits, as well as the results. A seventh and final section presents an over-all view of the benefit-cost analysis in terms of profitability. Finally, the report discusses some of the policy implications of the analysis and some of the issues that must be addressed in making policy choices based on this evidence.

Bauch, Jerold P. and Hau, Huei-hsin Joyce. "Montessori: Right or Wrong Number Concepts." Arithmetic Teacher, Vol. 35 (6), February 1988, pp. 8-11. ERIC EJ366591.

Argues that, though considerable difference of view is evident between Montessori and Piaget about the importance of certain concepts and level of cognitive development necessary for genuine understanding, the ideas and methods first presented by Montessori 80 years ago stand up well when evaluated through the lens of current research.

Draper, Thomas W. et al. "Making the Computer Fit the Child Rather than the Child Fit the Computer: Conversations Between Children and Robots." Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Southwestern Society for Research in Human Development, March 6-8, 1986, 4 pp. ERIC ED 267931.

This paper introduces and develops the premise that technology should be used as a tool to be adapted to early childhood education rather than adapting the preschool curriculum to computers. Although recent evidence suggests a national interest in having high technology play a role in the teaching of young children, particularly in reading, writing, and math, conflicting evidence suggests that the most essential development for preschool children takes place in other areas. Therefore, it is argued that technology used with preschoolers should focus on the essential tasks that need to be accomplished by young children. Such areas as the development of perceptual and cognitive skills, productive and receptive language skills, competence motivation, appreciation of feelings, acquisition of general knowledge, motor coordination and the understanding of social interactions have usually been regarded as primary foci in programs for young children. This paper describes a modest evaluation of the possibilities of computers relating to children through conversation, visual representation, and movement.

Elliot, Sharon et al. "Early Childhood Teacher Education Guidelines for Four and Five-Year Programs: A Preliminary Survey of Their Relevancy and Impact." Young Children, Vol. 39 (5), July 1984, pp. 54-56. ERIC EJ301772.

The impact of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines was suggested by the questionnaire responses of 214 individuals involved in early childhood training.

Futrell, Mary Hatwood. "Public Schools and Four-Year Olds: A Teacher's View." American Psychologist, Vol. 42 (3), March, 1987, pp. 251-53. ERIC EJ355123.

Examines the questions of opening public schools to four-year-olds. Criticizes arbitrary, age-based models of appropriate instruction and advances an educational philosophy based on the ideal of lifelong learning.

Goffin, Stacie G. "Developing a Research Agenda for Early Childhood Education: What Can Be Learned from the Research on Teaching?" ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Urbana, Ill., 1988. 36 pp. Sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, D.C. ERIC ED290562.

The purpose of this paper is to review the research literature on effects produced by elementary school teachers and to identify implications of the findings for the early education of children prior to the first grade. Current issues in the research on teacher effects are discussed under the following headings: (1) teachers do make a difference; (2) learning occurs in multiple contexts; (3) students are active participants; (4) teachers are decision-makers; and (5) uses of the research on teaching. The review indicates that current research on teaching can inform early educators and researchers about the complexities of teaching and learning, and the importance of the teacher role. Implications are discussed in terms of purposes of early education, relevant findings from the research on teaching, and relevant consideration for developing a research agenda for early education. Such considerations include the role of learning in development, the impact of different early childhood contexts, the changing nature of the child, and the changing nature of the teacher as decision-maker. It is argued that early education needs to move beyond its psychological and theoretical basis to develop an empirical base specific to early education in order to verify the assumptions early childhood makes about meaningful teacher practices. A 79-item reference list concludes the document.

Green, Christine and Russell, Joanne Collins. "Innovation in Early Education: Boston's Team Effort." Equity and Choice, Vol. 3 (3), Spring, 1987, pp. 41-46. ERIC EJ356433.

Describes a collaborative effort between one school district of the Boston innovative program of public early childhood education institutions to create an innovative program of public early childhood education for 55 three-, four-, and five-year olds. The program attempts to improve educational services, teacher training and research opportunities.

Howes, Carolle et al. "Cost and Quality in Child Care: Reality and Myth." Child Care Information Exchange, (58), November, 1987, pp. 40-42. ERIC EJ363938.

Reports a study of 25 California state subsidized infant-toddler programs investigating the relationship of personnel costs and staffing practices to child care quality. Study results, when combined with findings of an earlier study by Olenick, provide evidence of a link between between personnel budgets and enhanced program quality.

Kansas State Dept. of Education. "Need and Feasibility for Early Childhood Education in the Public Schools: A Report to Kansas State Board of Education." 1986, 26 pp. Kansas State Dept. of Education, Topeka. State and Federal Programs Administration. ERIC ED280581.

The two parts of this report to the Kansas State Board of Education discuss the need for early childhood education, and the feasibility of early childhood education in the public schools. Data suggest a need for preschool education, especially for vulnerable children who cannot otherwise receive the benefits of education when they reach the age of 5 years. However, approximately two-thirds of Kansas respondents answered "no" when asked "Should the public school in your community be responsible for providing preschool education for 3- and 4-year olds?" In the absence of a public mandate for the public schools to become the agency for preschool education, there must be other overriding reasons to consider such a change in policy. Such reasons include the fact that the family has changed in ways impacting negatively on the development of preschool-age children. Many children are at risk but do not meet the criteria of "exceptional" and therefore cannot be served since funding is restricted to identified handicapped children. Based on the conclusion that Kansas should implement early childhood education in the public schools, the report includes 10 recommendations for implementation.

Kostelnik, Marjorie. "Program Evaluation: How to Ask the Right Questions." Child Care Information Exchange. (56), July 1987, pp. 3-8. ERIC EJ358412.

Outlines the process of evaluation of early childhood programs by administrators and teachers. Offers guidelines for formulating questions to be used in evaluation of these program dimensions: effort, process, adequacy of performance, and efficiency.

Morado, Carolyn. "Prekindergarten Programs for 4-Year-Olds: Some Key Issues." Young Children, Vol. 41 (5), July, 1986, pp.61-63. ERIC EJ339258.

Focuses on key policy issues surrounding the provisions of state-funded prekindergarten programs. Issues examined include program standards, stability, and continuity; program funding; coordination and continuity of education services; program eligibility; and the relationship between prekindergarten programs and educational reform.

National Center for Education Statistics "The Statistical Trends. Special Report: Early Childhood Education." Principal, Vol. 64 (5), May, 1985, pp. 16-17. ERIC EJ323588.

Nine graphs and tables present data on past and projected preschool enrollment, birth rates, participation by women in the work force, and effects of preschool programs on first grade achievement.

New York City Office of the Mayor. "Take a Giant Step: An Equal Start in Education for All New York City Four-Year-Olds. Final Report of the Early Childhood Education Commission." New York City Office of the Mayor, New York, 1986, 280 pp. ERIC ED267911.

In July of 1985, Edward Koch, the Mayor of the City of New York, appointed a Commission to develop recommendations for beginning the phased implementation of universally available preschool education for 4-year-olds beginning in September, 1986. This report constitutes the Commission's reply to the Mayor's request. Chapter 1 presents 10 recommendations with rationales and key supporting data. Chapter 2 describes and interprets the national and local research on the outcomes of preschool education and explains why the research supports the Mayor's proposal. Chapter 3 details the demographics and the enrollment patterns of the city's 4-year-olds. Chapter 4 provides a description of the three delivery systems that currently provide preschool educational programs, including legislative and funding history; a program model; eligibility criteria; funding sources and levels; staff qualifications and training provisions; and monitoring and evaluation provisions. Chapter 5 lays out the nine essential program components and associated rationales believed essential to accomplishing the goals of the program. Chapter 6 provides a guide on how recommendations might be implemented in the program's first year. Chapter 7 concludes by presenting the proposed budget necessary for program implementation. Nine pages of references are included; appended materials describe Department of Parks and Recreation preschool programs and chart early childhood program components.

Oertel, Frithjof M. "The Situation Oriented Approach to Preschool Curriculum." WCCI Forum: Journal of the World Council for Curriculum and Instruction, Vol. 6 (1), June, 1987, pp. 80-97. ERIC EJ365290

Describes preschool education in West Germany in terms of the various aspects of reform that changed function-oriented classrooms to situation-oriented learning environments. Argues for the priority of social education in early childhood. (BSR)

Pancrazio, Sally Bulkley et al. "Early Childhood Education Policy Study: An Overview and Policy Statement." Illinois State Board of Education, Springfield, Illinois, 1985, 69 pp. ERIC ED261794.

This study was conducted to learn whether the benefits of early childhood education would be sufficient to cause the State of Illinois to either support or require the provision of such services. Primary attention is given to: (1) the education of non-handicapped children between birth and entrance into first grade, and (2) those programs and services which influence the primary education continuum of instruction. National socio-economic trends in social influences are described in relation to the current status of Illinois' early childhood education in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs. The study of pre-kindergarten programs addresses the following topics: the kinds of pre-kindergarten programs and services provided and numbers of children served; their effectiveness; and identification of potential clients. The study of kindergarten programs examines the following topics: enrollment changes in the last five years; the types of schedules and their effects on children; types of curricula and their effects on children; and use of chronological age to determine compulsory attendance and entrance eligibility. In addition to a listing of state and federal initiatives and a summary of findings, an appendix provides a sample copy of the Early Childhood Education Program Survey Instrument used in 1984 to obtain baseline data on programs and to assess opinions of principals regarding early childhood education issues. A pamphlet describing the State Board of Education Policy on early childhood education is also given.

Rachal, Janella. "Final Evaluation and Report. 1986-87 Early Childhood Development Program." Louisiana State Department of Education, Baton Rouge, Office of Research and Development, 1987, 161 pp. ERIC ED286635.

The Early Childhood Development Program in Louisiana was established to improve the readiness of preschool-aged children, statewide. The target population included children who were eligible to enter kindergarten the following year, who were at high risk of not being sufficiently ready for the regular school program, and who had not been identified as eligible for special education services. The purpose of this evaluation of the 1986-87 program was to provide information to decision-makers at the state level that would assist them in making judgments about the extent to which the intended goals for early childhood development in the public schools had been attained, and about potential modifications needed in the operation and administration of the program. The report presents data in four areas: (1) the strengths and weaknesses of the early childhood programs, (2) the characteristics of the early childhood programs, (3) the perceptions of program staff concerning the operation and impact of the early childhood programs and the extent to which these reflected the developmental philosophy inherent in early childhood education. Conclusions and recommendations are included. Two appendices include early childhood program legislation and evaluation instruments, respectively.

Schweinhart, Lawrence J. and Mazur, Elizabeth, editors. "Prekindergarten Programs in Urban Schools." High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1987, 33 pp. ERIC ED289622.

A survey of early childhood programs in 38 large-city school districts in the Council of the Great City Schools is discussed in this report. The results reported are based on 18 responding school districts. The information on prekindergarten programs which is presented concerns: (1) enrollment and budgets; (2) types of programs; (3) funding; (4) length of program day; (5) policies regarding teacher qualifications and adult-child ratio; (6) the future of prekindergarten programs in urban schools; and (7) program evaluations. In addition, a statement concerning the potential benefits of good early childhood programs is included.

Schweinhart, Lawrence J. et al. "Policy Options for Preschool Programs." Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 68 (7), March 1987, pp. 524-29. ERIC EJ349190.

State and federal policymakers should consider research findings that demonstrate how quality early childhood programs prevent later academic failure among children from low-income families. Recommends ways funding and programs should be implemented. References included.

Smith, Robert F. "Theoretical Framework for Preschool Science Experiences." Young Children, Vol. 42 (2), January 1987, pp. 34-40. ERIC EJ347856.

Demonstrates how Piaget's theoretical framework of a preschool science curriculum, with illustrative experiences using paints, sound, and food, can help teachers develop their ability to provide appropriate science experiences in their classroom. The framework can also help teachers evaluate the activities suggested in literature. (BB)

Sunal-Szymanski, Cynthia. "Mapping for the Young Child." Social Studies, Vol. 78 (4), July/August 1987, pp.178-82. ERIC EJ357445.

Describes the importance of children developing proper mapping skills to help them understand their life space as they mature. Explains topological, projective, and Euclidean concepts in relation to how children should be taught about space concepts used in mapping. Focuses on integrating topological experiences into pre-school, primary grades curriculum.

Thompson, Virginia L. and Molnar, Janice. "Universally-Available Educational Programs for Four-Year-Olds: An Issue of Policy." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, DC, November 13-16, 1986, 23 pp.

In 1985, Edward Koch, Mayor of the New York City, established an Early Childhood Education Commission and gave it the task of recommending how best to begin to provide public education for all of the city's 4-year-olds, beginning in September, 1986. After introductory remarks indicating the confluence and interplay of social elements underpinning the Mayor's action, this paper (1) provides a review of the historical roots of New York City's day care, Head Start, and public school prekindergarten programs; (2) describes recent initiatives in providing early childhood

education; (3) briefly reports research findings concerning the effects of early childhood programs, giving particular attentio to studies conducted in New York City; (4) reports on the Commission's review of demographic data related to the city's population of 4-year-olds; (5) discusses the Commission's review of existing programs, attending specifically to the large number of economically disadvantaged children who remain unserved by public programs; (6) presents and discusses the 10 recommendations the Commission made to the Mayor; (7) describes the status of efforts to implement the recommendations; and (8) identifies policy issues facing the city's implementation efforts. It is concluded that whether or not the Commission's plan will be fully realized is a matter of policy.

Yagi, Kan. "ECIA, Chapter 1 Early Childhood Education Program in the Portland Public Schools, 1986-87 Evaluation Report." Portland Public Schools, Oregon, Research and Evaluation Department, 1987, 45 pp.

The Portland Chapter 1 Early Childhood Education Program is one of three arrangements in the district to offer education for preschool children. Together, the programs enrolled 1,500 students during 1986-87. Program costs amounted to approximately 2,000 dollars per year per child. The curriculum covered language, math, small and large motor functions, art and music, and personal and social development. Program activities alternated between large and small group contexts, with student movement around the classroom quite unrestricted except during direct instruction. Many of the techniques replicated those of the Headstart Program and the Montessori method. Data obtained via a rating form containing a large sample of the skills taught in the seven skill areas and via follow-up of children who completed the program indicate that the program helps children master skills and that replication of the program across years has been consistent. Evaluation instruments are appended.

Zimiles, Herbert. "Rethinking the Role of Research: New Issues and Lingering Doubts in an Era of Expanding Preschool Education." ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, Urbana, Illinois, sponsored by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, D.C., 1986, 35 pp. ERIC ED270222.

Changing ideas about the role of early childhood education increasingly point toward universal preschool education for

all children. Early education has come to serve many purposes but, as it expands, there is danger that the particular needs of young children will be overlooked by both professionals and parents. This essay underlines the vulnerability of young children and calls attention to the lifelong consequences of preschool experiences. Examining issues concerning the long-term effects of preschool experiences, the discussion suggests that the value of early education will vary as a function of a matrix of factors including program quality, the vulnerability of individual children, and family needs. Additionally, the achievments and limitations of evaluation research are described within the context of possible deleterious effects of preschool education. Emphasis is given to the importance of developing ideographic methods of study to achieve more valid assessments of children's response to early education. It is suggested that more time be devoted to understanding the effects of substitute child care on parental attitudes and behavior and to delineating and documenting the damaging consequences of poorly run early childhood programs.

Zorn, Robert L. "In Designing a Preschool Program, We Went Straight to the Source: Parents." American School Board Journal, Vol. 175 (2), February, 1988, pp. 28-29. ERIC EJ367342.

In response to overwhelming demand, Poland (Ohio) Schools proposed a pilot program to demonstrate that people wanted preschool and day care services that could pay for themselves. The program integrated early childhood programs with the regular school curriculum to stimulate children's interest in art, music, health, and sciences and develop motor and other abilities. Costs are included in inset.

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